Intermontanus

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADOPT-A-TORTOISE

Reprinted from the 1992 ***Nongame Bulletin*** *5(2). published by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.*

The Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) provides an opportunity for individuals living outside of Washington and Iron counties to adopt a desert tortoise. Threats of disease, altering wild gene pools, and concern for the well-being of individual animals have led to a ban on the release of captive tortoise into the wild. This presents wildlife biologists with the problem of what to do with 30 to 40 tortoise that are turned in annually. Consequently, procedures have been developed to allow individuals to adopt and care for these captive tortoise.

Individuals interested in adopting a tortoise should send their name and address to: *Wildlife Registration Office, 1596 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116*. Information on adoption requirements and an application will be provided. Applications must be completed and returned. The applicant's name will be placed on a list for adopting a desert tortoise on a first-come, first-served basis.

Desert tortoise require minimal care, live a long time and make great pets. However, if you find one in the wild, ***Leave It There!***

Desert tortoise are classified as a federally threatened species and each individual in the wild is critical. They are protected by federal and Utah laws. If you find a tortoise outside its desert habitat, notify and Utah Wildlife Resources office.

Remember, it is illegal to possess a tortoise without the required permits.

NEW PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Since the last newsletter we've received copies or notification of several new herp publications.

For those of you interested in the apparent decline in amphibian populations, the IUCN/SSC Task Force on Declining Amphibians is publishing *Froglog*. *Froglog* is published quarterly and is free. To be put on the mailing list write to: Dr. James Vial, Task Force Coordinator, Editor, Center for the Analysis of Environmental Change, EPA Environmental Research Laboratory, 200 South West 35th Street, Corvalis, Oregon 97333.

The Declining Amphibian Population Task Force (DAPTF) also has a Rocky Mountain Working Group for those interested in the amphibians of this area. You can be placed on the mailing list by contacting: Stephen Corn and Bruce Bury, Co-Chairs, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Ecology Research Center, 4512 McMurry Avenue, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525-3400.

The DAPTF Board adopted a series of statements as a framework for the task force. Below are three of these statements which I feel pertain to UtAH members. I also believe these statements pertain to reptiles as well as amphibians.

DAPTF Mission

To determine the nature, extent and causes of declines of amphibians throughout the world, and to promote means by which the declines can be halted or reversed.

GOALS:

1.Catalyze, catalogue and coordinate efforts to gain an understanding of declining amphibians.

2.Identify target populations, species and regions which merit immediate attention.

3.Gather and critically examine evidence concerning causal factors contributing to amphibian declines and identify remedial action.

4.Promote data collection on amphibian declines and identify remedial action.

5.Enlist the support of appropriate scientific disciplines needed to address issues.

DAPTF Statement on Trade and Exploitation

The Board of Directors of the IUCN/SSC Task Force on Declining Amphibian Populations recognizes that trade in amphibians is proving detrimental to many species. There is reason for concern at the documented ecological damage associated with excessive harvesting of frogs from the wild for human consumption. The introduction of alien species such as *Rana catesbeiana* to supply frogs for human consumption into new environments as an exotic species is demonstrably harmful.

Similarly, the export of live amphibians for the pet trade is attaining alarming proportions in countries such as Madagascar, the Solomon Islands and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Board of DAPTF calls upon governments to take actions to prevent illegal import and export of amphibians and to implement measures to reduce the harmful impacts of frogs collected or reared for human consumption.

The Board encourages the SCC Trade Specialist Group to work with members of the DAP Task Force to identify and promote actions to protect amphibians under the provisions of CITES.

DAPTF Statement of Ethics

Herpetologists should ensure that their actions do not jeopardize the viability of any native population, and they should discourage such practice by others.

Dr. John B. Iverson sent us an announcement of his book A Revised Ckecklist with Distribution Maps of the Turtles of the World. This is a substantial revision of Iverson's 1986 Turtle Checklist. At approximately 370 pages, it is 33% longer than the earlier version, and is now the most comprehensive guide available to the scientific nomenclature of the turtles of the world. The checklist includes updated distribution dot maps for all species, and information on the original citations, type specimens, type localities, distribution, and pertinent literature for all recognized species and subspecies. Dichotomous keys modified from the scientific literature are also included for identification down to species level. Phylogenetic relationships are illustrated for most taxa. This edition is currently available only in soft cover. Cost is $25 prepaid (including surface shipping). To order send check or money order to : John B. Iverson, Dept. of Biology, Earlham College, Richmond IN 47374.

We also received two full color amphibian and reptile magazines. One, The *Reptile & Amphibian Magazine* has been around since 1989 and is similar to the *Vivarium* in content. *Reptile & Amphibian Magazine* is published bimonthly, and contains articles on captive breeding, and natural history, as well as a number of other topics. Some of the articles in the issue we received are: "Amazon and Cook's Tree Boas"; "Aquatic Caecilians"; "Insect predation of Reptiles"; "Permanent Identification of Reptiles and Amphibians"; and "Fence

Lizards." The subscription rate is $12 for one year (6 issues) or $22 for two years (12 issues). To join, or for more information, contact *Reptile & Amphibian Magazine*, RD3, Box 3709-A, Pottsville, PA 17901.

The other full color magazine is *Captive Breeding* which was established this year. The goals of *Captive Breeding* are best summarized by an excerpt from a letter they send to prospective subscribers and contributors: "...The format for contributing an article is as follows: choose a specific species (subspecies) of herp that you have successfully bred. The article should include geographic origin, endangerment and status. It should go on to explain everything you did to achieve success, including details such as animal size, feeding schedules, lighting, cage temperatures, temperature cycles, dates of copulation (if known), shedding, gestation, incubation and births. Leave no guess work to the inexperienced hobbyist..." The Magazine is published quarterly and costs $20 per year. Contact *Captive Breeding*, P.O. Box 87100 Canton, Michigan 48187, phone (313) 454-0700, for more information.

Finally, Karl H. Swintak sent an announcement for his 32 page book The Life of Desert Reptiles and Amphibians. The book discusses 25 of the many reptiles, and only 2 amphibians which occur in the southwestern U.S. and northern and Baja Mexico. Each species discussed is illustrated with a color photograph. The cost is $3.50 each plus $1.50 shipping for the first book and $0.50 for each additional copy up to five. Six or more copies are $3.00 each post paid. Order from Karl H. Swintak, Natural History Photography, 6377 Stone Bridge Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95409.

Utah Association of Herpetologists

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Louis Porras

Intermontanus
Editor: Breck Bartholomew

All board members and editors are volunteers.

Membership: $7.00/year; includes six issues of *Intermontanus* and participation in all association activities. Send correspondence to: UtAH, 195 West 200 North, Logan UT 84321-3905.

FEATURES

IDENTIFICATION OF UTAH'S SPINY LIZARDS (GENUS *SCELOPORUS*)

The spiny lizards (genus *Sceloporus*) can be among the most difficult of Utah's reptiles to identify. But like many animals, once you know what to look for these lizards are easily identified. Presented here is a dichotomous key to the *Sceloporus* of Utah.

1a. Dark wedge-shaped mark on each side of neck. Often found in trees or on walls. Found in southern Utah only..... *S. magister*...see 2

1b. No dark wedge-shaped mark on each side of neck.....3

2a. Adult males with 5-6 chevron-shaped dorsal bars between the shoulders an the base of the tail. Head yellow or orange in both sexes. Found in southeastern Utah = *S. magister cephaloflavus* (orangehead spiny lizard)

2b. Adult males without distinct dorsal markings. Only females head's yellow or orange. Found in southwestern Utah = *S. magister uniformis* (yellowback spiny lizard)

3a. Granular scales on posterior surface of thigh. Mid-dorsal grayish stripe and lateral light stripes running from the eye to the base of the tail. Males with a mottled blue throat and two blue patches on the belly almost always separated by light color. Found throughout the state = *S. graciosus graciosus* (Northern sagebrush lizard)

3b. Scales on posterior of thigh keeled and over-lapping; not granular. dorsal pattern variable, but usually with several cross-bars. Found throughout the state except Rich, Cache, Weber, Davis, and Morgan counties.....4

4a. Small scales on posterior of thigh abruptly contrast with larger scales on the upper thigh. Single, blue throat patch. Found in western Utah from about Zion to Provo and in the extreme northwest corner of Box Elder County = *S. occidentalis longipes* (Great Basin fence lizard)

4b. Small scales on posterior of thigh gradually merge with larger scales on the upper thigh. Two small blue patches on either side of the throat. Found in eastern and southern Utah from the eastern side of the Pine Valley Mountains in Washington County to Daggett County = *S. undulatus elongatus* (northern plateau lizard)

Both *S. occidentalis* and *S. undulatus* occur in Washington county from the eastern side of the Pine Valley Mountains to Zion National Park. The best way to distinguish the two species is to look at the throat patches. These patches may be very faint in females so you may have to look at the thigh scales.

Breck Bartholomew, Utah State University, Logan UT 84322-5305

ADDITIONS TO THE LIST OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES SEEN IN THE STATE THIS YEAR

Hal Whitlock, Rush Larabee, and Kelly Swift have sent lists of the herps they've seen this year. Their lists are included here. In addition, Tim Graham notes he has seen *Thamnophis cyrtopsis cyrtopsis* in southeastern Utah.

Hal's list:

I've crisscrossed the state, from Daggett County to Washington County; and from Box Elder County to San Juan County. Just as a note, the rarer species listed have been found as a result of field work, not road hunting.

Reptiles:
Arizona elegans eburnata -9
Coluber constrictor mormon - 12
Crotalus cerastes cerastes - 3
Crotalus mitchelli pyrrhus - 1
Crotalus viridis lutosus - 4
Hypsiglena torquata deserticola - 1
Lampropeltis getula californiae - 3
Lampropeltis triangulum taylori - 1
Masticophis flagellum piceus - 2
Masticophis taeniatus taeniatus - 3
Pituophis Melanoleucus deserticola - 11
Rhinocheilus lecontei lecontei - 10
Salvadora hexalepis mojavensis - 1
Sonora semiannulata - 1
Trimorphodon biscutatus lambda - 1
Thamnophis elegans vagrans - 8
Gopherus agassizii - 5
Callisaurus draconoides rhodostictus - many, many
Cnemidophorus tigris tigris - very many
Coleonyx variegatus utahensis - 3
Crotaphytus collaris auriceps - 1
Crotaphytus bicinctores - 3
Eumeces skiltonianus utahensis - 2
Gambelia wislizenii wislizenii - 1
Heloderma suspectum cinctum - 1
Phrynosoma platyrhinos calidiarum - 3
Sauromalus obesus obesus - 1
Sceloporus graciosus graciosus - several
Sceloporus magister cephaloflavus - 3
Sceloporus magister uniformis - several
Sceloporus occidentalis - no numbers kept
Sceloporus undulatus - again no numbers kept
Uta stansburiana stansburiana - too many to count
Xantusia vigilis vigilis - 4

Amphibians:
Bufo punctatus - 18
Rana catesbeiana - 20
Hyla arenicolor - 1
Bufo woodhousii or *Scaphiopus intermontanus* - 3

Rush and Kelly's list:

During the amphibian count we found a bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) in a pond above Farmington and six leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*) in a pond near Willard Bay. Later we found leopard frogs in a marsh by East Canyon Reservoir. The leopard frogs in these two areas appear to have different adult sizes. The frogs at Willard Bay were all 3 to 4 inches long while the East Canyon frogs were all 1 1/2 to 2 inches long. On a herp trip to Skull Valley in May, we found a small natural spring with thousands of tadpoles and young Great Basin spadefoot toads (*Scaphiopus intermontana*).

Other herps seen this year include: *Sceloporus occidentalis longipes* in Tooele County; a gravid *Masticophis taeniatus taeniatus* in Tooele County; *Cnemidophorus tigris tigris* in Tooele and Salt Lake counties; *Pituophis melanoleucus deserticola* in Salt Lake County. We also saw several other *Sceloporus*, but we were not sure which species they were.

CAPTIVE CARE

BROWN HOUSE SNAKE *LAMPROPHIS FULIGINOSUS*

Lamprophis fuliginosus is one of a large group of African snakes commonly referred to as house snakes. The common or brown house snake was first described by Boie in 1827 as *Lycodon fuliginosus*. It has undergone numerous name changes and because of the wide distribution and color variation, some previously described species had been placed under the heading *boaedon fuliginosus*; another genus commonly known as house snakes but described by Fitzinger in 1926. In 1843 Fitzinger revised the house snakes and placed them in the genus *Lamprophis* where they remain today.

In addition to *Lamprophis fuliginosus*, there are several other species of *Lamprophis*, a couple of which are *L. aurora* and *L. olivaceous*. The most common house snake in U.S. collections is by far the brown house snake *L. fuliginosus*. They are found naturally throughout South Africa, Central, East, West Africa south of the Sahara, Zaire, and Sudan. It is strictly a savannah species and is not found in forested regions.

The dorsal coloring is quite variable, ranging from a light yellowish or reddish brown to a dark olive brown and sometimes to almost black. For an individual the base dorsal coloring is uniform with the markings being, for the most part, on the head an neck region. Two stripes on the head of a silver gray color exist. One runs from the snout to the base of the head dorsally while the other stripe runs from the eye to the juncture of the jaws. Here again is a case of wide variability. These stripes are quite distinct in babies and juveniles and seem to fade in some adults. Other adults retain the stripes and have additional markings such as mottling along the neck region, particularly in some parts of their range. The ventral coloration is a uniform white to grayish white.

Not a large snake by any means, they range in size from 46 to 120 cm (18 to 48 in). The males are generally smaller in total length than females. Hatchlings are from 22 to 25 cm (8 to 10 in).

Living up to its common name of house snake, it is most commonly found around settlements of any sort. They are also found in grassland, bush, and woodland savannah.

This snake is not overly aggressive, even wild caught specimens become quite docile after a short time in captivity.

The wild diet includes various rodents, bats, shrews, geckos, agamas, and other lizards. In captivity they do quite well on a steady diet of correct-sized mice .

The most notable, and up until recently, I believe, unknown characteristic of this snake is its reproductive proclivity, Although the literature describes finding ova present in August, September, October, November, December, January, and February it has not described the fact that the females will lay multiple clutches in a year. Although other snakes, most notably *Elaphe* and *Lampropeltis* will double clutch in a single year, *Lamprophis* is one of only a couple of species known to lay more. In 1990 one 3 ft, 4 year old female *L. fuliginosus* laid a total of four clutches totaling 52 fertile and four infertile ova; an average of 14 eggs per clutch. Incubated at around 82-85°F the eggs hatched in an average of 62 - 65 days. The young feed readily on small pinky mice.

All in all, This is a very good beginner's snake. Non-aggressive when handled, very active feeder, and multiple clutching will give the beginner a chance to hone their incubation and husbandry skills.

Stan Draper, *Skales-n-tails, Ltd.*, Salt Lake City, UT.

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84116-1812

HERPETOLOGICAL NOTES

DICEPHALIC WANDERING GARTER SNAKES

On about the first of September of this year a dicephalic (two-headed) wandering garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans vagrans*) was found in Amalga, Cache County, by a couple of young girls. Kathy Hansen, the mother of one of the girls, kept the snake for a week while trying to find a good home for it. She even force fed the snake twice. I'm happy to report that thanks to Kathy's efforts the snake is still alive and doing well.

Rumor has it that another dicephalic garter snake has been given to Hogle Zoo where it is being kept alive.

The last report of a dicephalic snake in Utah, that I know of, was also a garter snake found in Orem and donated to BYU back in 1978.

Breck Bartholomew, Utah State University, Logan UT 84322-5305.

CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale: Quality ratsnakes and other Colubrids. For free price list send a S.A.S.E. to Skales-n-Tails, Ltd., 1815 Sir James Circle, Salt Lake City, UT 84116-1812.

An Update on the Garter Snake Defense Question

In the last issue we mentioned a valley garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis fitchi*) that gave birth in its captor's hand. Well two weeks later on 26-7 July 1992 the snake gave birth to a clutch of 25. All of the babies were larger than the one born in Paul's hand on the 12th. It appears the first born may have actually been the result of a defensive reaction.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

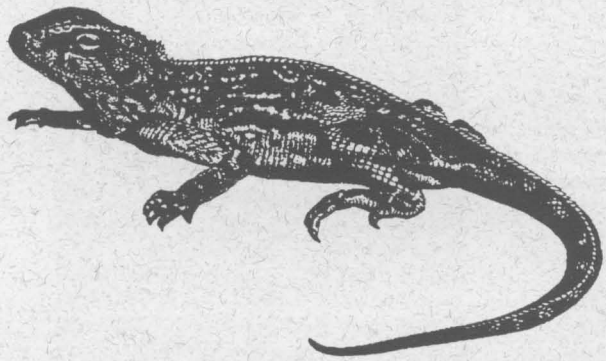
The International Herpetological Symposium, Inc.
Announces the 17th Annual Symposium
to be held in Miami Beach, Florida
June 17th through June 20th

CALL FOR PAPERS

The IHS presents papers on herpetoculture, natural history, veterinary medicine and other topics related to herpetology. Individuals interested in presenting a paper at this meeting (or attending) should write Richard Ross, MD, Institute for Herpetological Research, P.O. Box 2227, Stanford, CA 94309.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

If you have any herpetological information that you would like to share with UtAH members, please submit it for publication. We would like to publish a variety of things; from research to experiences with herps and artwork. It would be especially nice to hear from the many amateur herpetologists about their experiences. In addition, if you have questions or need information about any herpetological topic or species, let us know and we'll try to track down someone that has an answer.



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